

I, as other employees have been in requesting qualified interpreters from contract agencies although I have a staff interpreter who travels a lot and interpret for other deaf employees bureauwide. For a long time, contract interpreters were always available for me and those deaf employees. Until a few months ago, any contract agency said no interpreter available for us (even we requested a contract interpreter one month in advance). We, deaf employees and hearing requesters become more frustrated because of not able to get contract interpreters coming to our work. Now I know there is a real problem: they lost many good interpreters to Video Relay Services.

I, Federal deaf employee need to speak out about Video Relay Services who take most qualified interpreters from us in which we need the most in our workplace everyday. That trigger is: lack of contract interpreters to be available to federal deaf employees. VRI is not accessible for most federal deaf employees due to security reasons so we rely on live interpreters on board to make us more productive. I am concerned for other federal agencies who may have difficult times to get contract interpreters. Good reasons are to have interpreters at any agencies on board may provide accessible or equal opportunity such as promotion, hiring, training, etc.)

Video Relay Services are beneficial to us in some ways, but I feel that the FCC should limit numbers for Video Relay Services and need to expand live qualified interpreters for deaf employees in their agencies for many possibilities.

Thank you for your attention into this matter.